

With The First Nighters

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AVID BELASCO kept his word with the first-nighters. "The Boomerang" is everything he promised and considerably more. It is a rollicking comedy, played by a carefully selected company, and presented in typical Belasco fashion. The theme has to do with the application of a novel remedy for love-sickness, prescribed by a rising young physician who makes up in originality what he lacks in experience. The play revolves around the physician, the patient and the nurse.

Wallace Eddinger as Bud Woodbridge, the lovesick youth, played a particularly difficult role to perfection. Arthur Byron as the daring physician whose cure worked so well that it effected him as well as his patient, was also happily cast and his work was splendid. The success of the play owes much to the exquisite bit of acting essayed by Martha Hedman, who does the part of the nurse in a more than pleasing manner. These three talented artists carry the plot from start to finish, assisted by a small company splendidly cast.

But what's the use of attempting to criticise the production. When Belasco presents a play, it goes without saying that the master critic has already passed judgment and all there is left to do is to go and see the play—and look on and laugh or cry, just as it happens to strike you.

"The Boomerang" played the first three nights of the week and then surrendered the boards to "The Knife," a Shubert production from the pen of Eugene Walter. This latter play also features the work of a surgeon-physician who effects a wonderful cure. It is intensely dramatic at times but one cannot call it a well balanced production. The author apparently became so wrapped up in the heavy plot that he altogether forgot to insert any humor in the lines. So it is that the play depresses you continually and you do not find relief from your feelings until you leave the playhouse. It would seem that the plot has finer possibilities.

This is no attempt to discredit the production. Only, to thoroughly enjoy it, one must have a taste for such shows as "Madame X" and other like gloomy and gruesome plays. The company is good, and features Norman Hackett who formerly played in a local stock company and was a great favorite. His work in "The Knife" is difficult but he essays the role of the physician most acceptably. Clifford Stork as the attorney friend does some splendid acting and so does May Buckley. The show runs this after-

noon and night. If one cares for this class of melodrama, it is well worth seeing.

ORPHEUM

INSPIRING in every way, making the blood tingle, bringing out all the patriotism that is in the individual and causing him to be prouder than ever that he is an American, is the patriotic spectacle "America First," the headliner at the Orpheum this week. Spectacular? Yes, and no. For all attempts at the dramatic are eliminated and a most stirring appeal is made to every American to join the colors. And it does appeal. You want to hurrah. You want to don the brown khaki uniform which the soldier boys of this greatest nation on earth wear. You want to march with them and follow Old Glory wherever the flag goes. And this applies to all, old and young alike.

Moving pictures add to the presen-

tation of the spectacle. The three principal scenes represent the West Point Military Academy, the foredeck of the dreadnaught, Pennsylvania, and an encampment somewhere in the United States. There are patriotic songs. There is flashed on the screen pictures of Lincoln and Grant and Sherman and Sheridan; of McKinley and Roosevelt and of President Wilson, all of which make one feel proud that he is an American citizen. Were there nothing else upon the bill this week, you would come away from the playhouse feeling better because you were there.

The "New Bell Boy" is a medium for a most laughable act in which the characters are well portrayed, that of the new boy by Ben Deely being particularly pleasing. There is a dramatic cartoon presented by Miss Norton and Paul Nicholson that is extremely clever, although much of the repartee fails to get across the footlights, owing to the low voice of Miss Norton.

Four favorites in the Chinese quartette render several delightful and most tuneful selections. Then Bert Melrose in his clown balancing act is very much out of the ordinary. "Just Fun," by Helene Hamilton and Jack Barnes is all that the title suggests. Their act is most laughable. Cleve and O'Connor in the opening number of the bill are clever. The bill in its entirety is more than good.

PANTAGES

IF the five acts presented at Pantages this week, every one is a headliner—some are better than others but all are more than good and there is variety enough in the bill to please all. Exceptionally clever acting is that of Leila Shaw in the "Truthful Liar," also by the others in the playlet, but Miss Shaw just bubbles over and she charms in every way, in this most amusing skit.

The musical comedy "Miss Hamlet," in which Pauline Barri and her company of eleven people appear, is chock full of clever acting, pretty dancing features, charming chorus and presents a travesty on the original Hamlet that is very pleasing.

There are three lyres in Harvey, Henderson and Leonard that are all that the title implies, for they are most tuneful and their stories are new and far above the average. This is also true of the unique comedy combination, something entirely different—in which Howard, Kibel and Herbert present a stunt that carries the house with them from their entrance until their exit from the stage. The songs of both these combinations are catchy.

The animal act with which the bill is opened is a paradox of animal life in which the animals, cats and rats are seen in an unusual laughter-producing novelty, the boxing match between two felines being out of the ordinary. There is the screen picture of "The Fatal Ring," in which Pearl White is featured and the delightful music of Gronneman's orchestra to add to the pleasure of the evening.

THE WILKES

THE "Spendthrift," written by Porter Emerson Browne, author of "A Fool There Was," affords an excellent opportunity for exploiting the talents of the two featured players of the Wilkes company, Nana Bryant and Ralph Cloninger. The play calls for a small but select cast and deals with the every day problem of economy vs. extravagancy. There are some clever lines and the humor is quite refreshing.

Miss Bryant does some splendid emotional acting in the play and Mr. Cloninger shows to far better advantage this week than last. Both are a



A SCENE FROM "THE WAIL OF AN ESKIMO" PLAYED BY HARRY GIRARD AND COMPANY AS ONE OF THE HEADLINE FEATURES OF THE NEW VAUDEVILLE BILL WHICH OPENS AT THE ORPHEUM THEATRE NEXT WEDNESDAY EVENING